



Taka Ishii

Gallery



Sterling Ruby “SPECTERS TOKYO”

Dates: Nov 23 – Dec 23, 2023

Location: Stone garden “Heaven,” The Sogetsu Kaikan 1F

Opening Reception: Thursday, Nov 23, 15:00 – 17:00

Taka Ishii Gallery is pleased to announce “SPECTERS TOKYO,” a solo exhibition by Sterling Ruby taking place at the Sogetsu Plaza from November 23rd to December 23rd, 2023 in Akasaka, Tokyo. This exhibition is in conjunction with two other solo shows running concurrently at Taka Ishii Gallery (TERRADA ART COMPLEX II) and Taka Ishii Gallery Kyoto, all featuring new work by the artist. The show marks Ruby’s first public installation in Japan, in which the artist reimagines Isamu Noguchi’s “Heaven” to explore the interactions between the living and the dead.

Known for his multi-disciplinary sculptural works, Sterling Ruby presents a new site-specific installation, which draws influence from *kaidan*, a genre of Japanese ghost stories originating in the Edo period and popularized by Greek-Japanese writer Lafcadio Hearn. Through the lens of Hearn’s vivid and visceral tales, the artist dives straight into stories of *yōkai*, a class of spirits and supernatural entities, from a predominately Japanese perspective, transforming Noguchi’s stage-like indoor garden into a spectral netherworld inhabited by faceless spirits.

Originating from his 2019 *Desert X* installation *SPECTER*, which consisted of a fluorescent monolith juxtaposed against the stark Californian desert, Ruby completely transforms the “specter” into a hauntingly figurative object that can be perceived across cultural contexts.

“The neon cube stood against the desert backdrop and did many optic things throughout the day such as appearing as if space was cut out of the natural world around it or floating like an apparition. Continuing this train of thought I decided to make a new body of work that is truly about the specter, the apparition, the ghost, the supernatural...the otherworldly.”

-- Sterling Ruby, 2023

Ruby’s immense specters, made from heavily-worn, tattered textiles and other found objects, are suspended from the ceiling, floating weightlessly, and creating an immersive, almost puppet-like scene. The ghosts hold agrarian tools, metal armatures, and dried gourds, which act as direct and indirect references to Hearn’s *yōkai* as well as other Euro-American ghost folklore. Ruby’s installation enthralls, terrifies, and reminds us that the dead, whose absences are painful and hard to understand, may still walk among us.

[Concurrent Exhibitions]

Sterling Ruby "Heat. Minthe. Swells."

Dates: November 23 – December 23, 2023

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery (TERRADA ART COMPLEX II)

Sterling Ruby "SPECTERS KYOTO"

Dates: November 25, 2023 – January 20, 2024

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Kyoto

Born in 1972, Sterling Ruby works with a wide range of aesthetic and material strategies from sculptures made of saturated, glossy, poured polyurethane, bronze, and steel, to drawings, collages, richly glazed ceramics, paintings, photography, and video, as well as textile works that include quilts, tapestries, garments, and soft sculptures. His work is a balancing act, maintaining a constant tension between a multitude of elements. It deals with issues related to the violence and pressures within society, and art history, even as it also reflects his personal history. In all of his work, he vacillates between the fluid and static, the minimalist and expressionistic, the pristine and the defaced.

Ruby's solo exhibitions include Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome (2021); Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens (2021); the ICA Miami (2019) which traveled to the ICA Boston (2020); Museum of Arts and Design, New York (2018); Winterpalais, Belvedere Museum, Vienna (2016); FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims (2012) which traveled to Centre D'Art Contemporain, Geneva (2012) and to Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2008). In 2014 he participated in the Gwangju Biennale, Taipei Triennale, and Whitney Biennial.

Ruby's sculpture DOUBLE CANDLE (2018) is installed permanently at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC. His works are included in the collections of Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Tate Modern, London; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Moderna Museet, Stockholm among others.

For further information, please contact:

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Tue-Sat 12:00 – 19:00 Closed on Sun, Mon, and National Holidays



Sterling Ruby

“SPECTERS”, 2023

Metal, textiles, wood, gourds

579.1 x 259.1 x 289.6 cm

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Photo: Matthew Grover